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AUTHOR Haynes, Diane
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ABSTRACT

This paper provides descriptive information on high school students who have dropped out, graduated, or left the Seattle Public Schools for other reasons since the 1981-82 school year. First, the number and percentage of leaving students for each of four reasons (exemption, termination, suspension/expulsion, no-show) are indicated. Additional tables show the distribution of dropouts by grade and gender; ethnicity and gender; ethnicity and free lunch status; and family status, ethnicity, and gender. Dropout rates for each high school in the Seattle school district are presented, as are data on the distribution of graduates by school, gender, and ethnicity. Finally, the use and definition of the word "dropout" is explained, and the significance and limitations of the data reported in the paper are briefly discussed. (GC)

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MANAGEMENT INFORMATION PAPER

Seattle Public Schools
815 Fourth Avenue North
Seattle, Washington, 98109

STATISTICS ON STUDENTS LEAVING THE SEATTLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS 1981-1985

REPORT NO. 86-4
JANUARY 1986

Prepared by
DIANE HAYNES

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION AND DISTRICT RELATIONS
Olaf Kvamme, Assistant Superintendent

EVALUATION SERVICES DEPARTMENT
Nicholas Stayrook, Manager

STUDENT INFORMATION SYSTEMS OFFICE
George Sanders, Supervisor

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STATISTICS ON STUDENTS LEAVING SEATTLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The attached set of tables provides descriptive information on high school students who have dropped out, graduated, or left Seattle Public Schools for other reasons. These data cover school years 1981-82, 1982-83, 1983-84 and 1984-85.

All data for this project was obtained from the Student Master File and Student Placement computer files. It includes students who left the District and who did not reenter during that school year nor at the beginning of the subsequent school year.

It is extremely important to pay careful attention to the release reasons and dates used in this type of analysis. Small changes in the release reasons included or the time spans studied lead to large changes in the data.

How many students (grades 9-12) left the Seattle Public Schools between 9-1-84 and 8-31-85 for reasons other than graduation?

For record keeping purposes, Seattle School District has a list of reasons for releasing a student from a school or program. These reasons have been grouped into five categories:

- Exemption - a student is exempted from the mandatory attendance law.
- Termination - a student formally leaves the District.
  Included are "unable to locate" students. These students may have moved, enrolled in a private school, or left for a variety of unknown reasons.
- Suspension or Expulsion
- Graduation
- No Show - a student left a school to transfer to another school or program but does not show up at the new school.
  The discrimination between the no shows who moved away, went to private schools, or "dropped out" is irretrievably lost for all school years on the Student Master File because schools do not have the opportunity to enter the real release reason unless the student has actually attended the assigned school.

Table 1 shows the number and percentage of all students in grades 9-12 released from Seattle Public Schools during 1984-85 and not picked up by another Seattle public school during that school year and who did not reenter at the beginning of the 1985-86 school year. Graduates are the only group not represented in this table.

TABLE 1

Distribution of All Leaving Students By Release Reasons
For 1984-85 School Year

Release Reasons	No. of Students	Percentage
Exemptions	1116	28.5
Terminations	1685	43.1
Suspensions/expulsions	546	14.0
No shows	564	14.4
Total	3911	100.0%

How do these figures relate to dropout statistics?

In an effort to standardize the definition of a dropout, the state provided a definition to be used by each school district. The definition is as follows:

Dropout

A dropout is a student who leaves school for any reason, except death, before graduation or completion of a program of studies and without transferring to another school. An individual is considered a dropout whether his dropping out occurs during or between regular school terms.

The dropout count, therefore, is a year round, or annual, dropout count rather than a nine month count.

Students who left school for any of the following reasons are classified as dropouts:

- Employment
- Marriage
- Pregnancy
- Enlistment in Armed Forces
- Suspension or expulsion with pupil not returning during the period being reported.
- Left school for other reason, but did not enroll and attend the following September.

Students who left school for any of the following reasons are not classified as dropouts:

- Enrollment in another public school district or private school.
- Deceased
- Supervision by public or private agency.
- Completion of General Education Development Certificate (GED).
- Suspension or expulsion with pupil returning during the period being reported.
- Left school for other reason, but did enroll and attend the following September.
- Physically or mentally unable to attend.
- Not a resident at the completion of the reporting period.

How many dropouts were there for the 1981-82, 1982-83, 1983-84 and 1984-85 school years and what are their demographic characteristics?

Table 2 presents the number of dropouts by grade and gender for each of the past four school years.

TABLE 2

Distribution of Dropouts by Grade and Gender

Year	Grade	Gender		Total	%
		Male	Female		
1984-85	9	551	425	976	41.3
	10	348	282	630	26.7
	11	235	175	410	17.3
	12	201	145	346	14.7
	Total	1335	1027	2362	100.0
1983-84	9	667	528	1195	45.5
	10	404	293	697	26.6
	11	253	179	432	16.4
	12	200	101	301	11.5
	Total	1524	1101	2625	100.0
1982-83	9	608	491	1099	42.4
	10	350	318	668	25.8
	11	248	187	435	16.8
	12	235	155	390	15.0
	Total	1441	1151	2592	100.0
1981-82	9	508	373	881	29.7
	10	412	369	781	26.4
	11	352	265	617	20.8
	12	415	269	684	23.1
	Total	1687	1276	2963	100.0

Table 3 shows the number of dropouts by ethnic group and gender for each of the past four school years.

TABLE 3

Distribution of Dropouts by Ethnicity and Gender from 1981-85

Year	Ethnic	Gender Male	Female	Total	%	District %
1984-85	Asian	188	111	299	12.7	21.5
	Black	456	341	797	33.7	22.4
	Latino	72	51	123	5.2	3.7
	Native American	69	72	141	6.0	2.3
	White	550	452	1002	42.4	50.1
	Total*	1335	1027	2362	100.0	100.0
1983-84	Asian	199	127	326	12.4	21.0
	Black	508	368	876	33.3	21.8
	Latino	57	60	117	4.5	3.7
	Native American	64	68	132	5.0	2.2
	White	696	477	1173	44.7	51.3
	Total*	1524	1101	2625	100.0	100.0
1982-83	Asian	233	150	383	14.8	21.0
	Black	423	370	793	30.6	21.3
	Latino	56	59	115	4.4	3.6
	Native American	85	71	156	6.0	2.3
	White	644	501	1145	44.2	51.8
	Total	1441	1151	2592	100.0	100.0
1981-82	Asian	323	182	505	17.0	20.9
	Black	482	354	836	28.2	19.3
	Latino	80	50	130	4.4	3.5
	Native American	53	65	118	4.0	2.5
	White	749	625	1374	46.4	53.8
	Total	1687	1276	2963	100.0	100.0

*This total does not include one student with incomplete data.

Table 4 presents a distribution of dropouts by ethnic group and free or reduced-price lunch status for each of the past four school years.

TABLE 4

Distribution of Dropouts by Ethnicity and Free Lunch Status

Year	Ethnic	Free Lunch	Reduced-Price Lunch	Not Participating	Total
1984-85	Asian	144	15	140	299
	Black	315	37	445	797
	Latino	35	5	83	123
	Native American	82	3	56	141
	White	181	37	784	1002
	Total*	757	97	1508	2362
1983-84	Asian	187	22	117	326
	Black	350	29	497	876
	Latino	37	6	74	117
	Native American	55	3	74	132
	White	164	39	970	1173
	Total*	794	99	1732	2625
1982-83	Asian	240	10	133	383
	Black	287	36	470	793
	Latino	35	8	72	115
	Native American	69	6	81	156
	White	179	52	914	1145
	Total	810	112	1670	2592
1981-82	Asian	355	7	143	505
	Black	256	22	558	836
	Latino	32	11	87	130
	Native American	42	1	75	118
	White	184	38	1152	1374
	Total	869	79	2015	2963

*This total does not include one student with incomplete data.

Tables 5, 6, 7 and 8 present the number of dropouts by ethnic group, gender and family status for each of the past four school years.

TABLE 5

1984-85 Distribution of Dropouts by Family Status, Ethnicity, and Gender

		Family Status			
Ethnicity	Gender	Both Parents	Single Parent	Other*	Total
Asian	Male	78	44	65	187
	Female	37	28	46	111
Black	Male	84	271	100	455
	Female	45	190	106	341
Latino	Male	21	33	18	72
	Female	14	22	15	51
Native American	Male	19	38	12	69
	Female	8	34	29	71
White	Male	173	239	137	549
	Female	121	195	134	450
Total***		600	1094	662	2356

TABLE 6

1983-84 Distribution of Dropouts by Family Status, Ethnicity, and Gender

		Family Status			
Ethnicity	Gender	Both Parents	Single Parent	Other*	Total
Asian	Male	68	49	82	199
	Female	54	35	38	127
Black	Male	111	281	114	506
	Female	56	211	100	367
Latino	Male	14	26	17	57
	Female	10	31	19	60
Native American	Male	13	33	18	64
	Female	12	32	24	68
White	Male	233	295	167	695
	Female	159	197	120	476
Total**		730	1190	699	2619

*Includes living alone, with guardian, with agency, or with spouse.
**This total does not include six students with incomplete data.
***This total does not include six students with incomplete data.

TABLE 7

1982-83 Distribution of Dropouts by Family Status, Ethnicity, and Gender

Ethnicity	Gender	Family Status: Both Parents	Single Parent	Other*	Total
Asian	Male	78	47	108	233
	Female	67	27	56	150
Black	Male	85	239	99	423
	Female	60	204	106	370
Latino	Male	16	27	13	56
	Female	12	31	16	59
Native American	Male	18	41	25	84
	Female	18	32	21	71
White	Male	252	253	139	644
	Female	158	207	136	501
Total***		764	1108	719	2591

TABLE 8

1981-82 Distribution of Dropouts by Family Status, Ethnicity, and Gender

Ethnicity	Gender	Family Status: Both Parents	Single Parent	Other*	Total
Asian	Male	97	42	182	321
	Female	67	33	82	182
Black	Male	105	257	120	482
	Female	57	185	112	354
Latino	Male	29	33	18	80
	Female	9	19	22	50
Native American	Male	7	24	22	53
	Female	12	33	20	65
White	Male	294	291	164	749
	Female	197	291	137	625
Total**		874	1208	879	2961

*Includes living alone, with guardian, with agency, or with spouse.
**This total does not include two students with incomplete data.
***This total does not include one student with incomplete data.

WHY ARE DATES SO IMPORTANT IN DEFINING DROPOUTS STATISTICS?

Students do not drop out at a steady rate. They tend to drop out at the end of the year and return at the beginning of the new school year. Because of this asymmetry, an annual dropout rate will vary considerably depending upon the time allowed for students to come back in the fall. For example, the number of 1984-85 dropouts was 2,362, not counting students who returned on the first day in the fall (October 1, 1985).

The following table shows the total number who had returned by a number of possible alternative reporting dates and the corresponding number of dropouts using that date as a cutoff.

CUTOFF DATE	TOTAL DROPOUTS RETURNING	NUMBER REPORTED
Oct. 01, 1985	0	2,362
Oct. 15, 1985	281	2,081
Nov. 01, 1985	343	2,019
Nov. 15, 1985	370	1,992
Dec. 01, 1985	383	1,979
Jan. 01, 1986	423	1,939

The state has varied the cutoff date over the years resulting in varying dropout rates for Seattle. To assure that trend data for this report is comparable from year to year, we have standardized our definition of dropout as follows. A student is counted as a dropout unless they register on the first day of the following school year. This means that figures contained in this report will not be consistent with past data reported to the state using October and November cutoff dates.

What is the dropout rate for each high school for each of the past four school years?

Table 9 shows the number of dropouts in high schools for each time span. In order to determine the total number of students in each school during the year, the total number of dropouts were added to the year end enrollment.

TABLE 9

Number of Dropouts in High Schools

	1984-85 School year			1983-84 School Year			1982-3 School Year			1981-82 School Year		
School	Dropouts	Total Students	%	Dropouts	Total Students	%	Dropouts	Total Students	%	Dropouts	Students	%
Ballard	160	1,467	10.9	171	1,458	11.7	194	1,598	12.1	252	1,668	15.1
Cleveland	86	885	9.7	94	939	10.0	83	926	9.0	109	1,005	10.8
Franklin	113	1,451	7.8	148	1,481	10.0	149	1,468	10.1	250	1,679	14.9
Garfield	191	1,666	11.5	188	1,652	11.4	195	1,501	13.0	219	1,542	14.2
Roosevelt	112	1,666	6.7	101	1,695	6.0	112	1,691	6.6	172	1,826	9.4
Sealth	155	1,072	14.5	147	1,128	13.0	151	1,192	12.7	158	1,228	12.9
West Seattle	149	1,110	13.4	142	1,069	13.2	179	1,147	15.6	153	1,187	12.9
Ingraham	104	1,611	6.5	141	1,573	9.0	163	1,632	10.0	213	1,746	12.2
Rainier Beach	116	1,129	10.3	91	1,034	8.8	124	1,051	11.8	125	1,044	12.0
Nathan Hale	122	1,201	10.2	129	1,163	11.1	118	1,284	9.2	135	1,379	9.9
Other*	1,054	2,552	41.3	1,273	2,863	44.5	1,124	2,760	40.7	1,177	2,981	39.5
Total (All 9-12)	2,362	15,810	14.9	2,625	16,055	16.3	2,592	16,250	16.0	2,963	17,285	17.1

*Alternative Schools, Special Programs, Work Training Programs, Inter-Agency Programs, etc.

Tables 10, 11, 12 and 13 present the distribution of dropouts by school by grade for each of the past three years.

TABLE 10

Distribution of Dropouts by School by Grade for 1984-85

SCHOOL	Grade Level 9	10	11	12	TOTAL
Ballard	53	45	31	31	160
Cleveland	28	27	20	11	86
Franklin	44	31	21	17	113
Garfield	49	58	35	49	191
Roosevelt	38	27	23	24	112
Sealth	64	39	30	22	155
West Seattle	57	52	21	19	149
Ingraham	24	27	21	32	104
Rainier Beach	38	30	23	25	116
Nathan Hale	46	24	27	25	122
Other*	535	270	158	91	1,054
Total (All 9-12)	976	630	410	346	2,362

TABLE 11

Distribution of Dropouts by School by Grade for 1983-84

SCHOOL	Grade Level 9	10	11	12	TOTAL
Ballard	64	45	37	24	170
Cleveland	40	32	14	8	94
Franklin	34	47	38	27	146
Garfield	55	56	46	31	188
Roosevelt	28	27	19	26	100
Sealth	53	50	29	15	147
West Seattle	51	49	21	21	142
Ingraham	41	47	36	22	146
Rainier Beach	28	26	17	20	91
Nathan Hale	63	27	26	13	129
Other*	734	295	149	93	1,271
Total (All 9-12)	1,191	701	432	300	2,624

*Alternative Schools, Special Programs, Work Training Programs, Inter-Agency Programs, etc.

TABLE 12

Distribution of Dropouts by School by Grade for 1982-83

SCHOOL	Grade Level 9	10	11	12	TOTAL
Ballard	61	44	37	52	194
Cleveland	33	20	20	10	83
Franklin	43	43	38	25	149
Garfield	57	60	36	42	195
Roosevelt	47	34	13	18	112
Sealth	67	44	30	10	151
West Seattle	56	63	39	21	179
Ingraham	58	41	35	29	163
Rainier Beach	52	38	22	12	124
Nathan Hale	48	22	21	27	118
Other*	577	259	144	144	1,124
Total (All 9-12)	1,099	668	435	390	2,592

TABLE 13

Distribution of Dropouts by School by Grade for 1981-82

SCHOOL	Grade Level 9	10	11	12	TOTAL
Ballard	96	85	34	37	252
Cleveland	34	34	25	16	109
Franklin	53	75	61	61	250
Garfield	78	60	48	33	219
Roosevelt	60	34	39	39	172
Sealth	59	40	30	29	158
West Seattle	30	47	44	32	153
Ingraham	34	41	54	84	213
Rainier Beach	31	41	24	29	125
Nathan Hale	28	45	32	30	135
Other*	378	279	226	294	1,177
Total (All 9-12)	881	781	617	684	2,963

*Alternative Schools, Special Programs, Work Training Programs, Inter-Agency Programs, etc.

How many students graduated?

Table 14 shows the distribution of graduates by ethnicity and gender for each of the past four school years.

TABLE 14

Distribution of Graduates by Gender and Ethnicity

Year	Ethnic	Gender Male	Female	Total
1984-85	(Missing Code)		1	1
	Native American	14	23	37
	Asian	346	269	615
	Black	206	246	452
	Latino	29	56	85
	White	701	713	1,414
	Total	1,296	1,308	2,604
1983-84	Native American	18	18	36
	Asian	321	257	578
	Black	191	271	462
	Latino	51	56	107
	White	769	792	1,561
	Total	1,350	1,394	2,744*
1982-83	Native American	22	19	41
	Asian	348	300	648
	Black	180	245	425
	Latino	38	52	90
	White	775	757	1,532
	Total	1,363	1,373	2,736
1981-82	Native American	30	33	63
	Asian	327	294	621
	Black	209	236	445
	Latino	50	49	99
	White	893	906	1,799
	Total	1,509	1,518	3,027

*These students represent 74% of the 1980-81 ninth grade class which consisted of 3,724 students.

Tables 15, 16, 17 and 18 presents the distribution of graduates by school by ethnicity for each of the past four years.

TABLE 15

Distribution of 1984-85 Graduates by School by Ethnicity

School	Ethnic Group: Native American	Asian	Black	Latino	White	Total
Ballard	3	59	15	8	196	281
Cleveland	3	91	24	3	69	190
Franklin	3	83	60	6	153	305
Garfield	1	22	94	4	150	271
Roosevelt	4	54	47	15	238	358
Sealth	4	79	21	17	88	209
West Seattle	3	56	24	6	91	180
Ingraham	5	76	40	9	180	310
Rainier Beach	1	42	39	7	74	163
Nathan Hale	2	44	43	6	124	219
Other* 1	8	9	45	4	51	118
Total (All 9-12) 1	37	615	452	85	1,414	2,604

TABLE 16

Distribution of 1983-84 Graduates by School by Ethnicity

School	Ethnic Group: Native American	Asian	Black	Latino	White	Total
Ballard	9	71	8	9	197	294
Cleveland	2	83	26	3	86	200
Franklin	2	86	72	8	132	300
Garfield	1	18	111	5	136	271
Roosevelt	4	55	36	11	289	395
Sealth	4	59	40	16	106	225
West Seattle	4	49	10	13	86	162
Ingraham	4	65	35	9	175	288
Rainier Beach	--	44	34	11	96	185
Nathan Hale	1	41	53	14	180	289
Other*	5	7	37	8	78	135
Total (All 9-12)	36	578	462	107	1,561	2,744

*Alternative Schools, Special Programs, Work Training Programs, Inter-Agency Programs, etc.

TABLE 17

Distribution of 1982-83 Graduates by School by Ethnicity

School	Ethnic Group: Native American	Asian	Black	Latino	White	Total
Ballard	4	69	4	9	235	321
Cleveland	1	98	23	6	52	180
Franklin	4	97	67	6	132	306
Garfield	2	20	85	3	151	261
Roosevelt	--	83	32	14	227	356
Sealth	5	61	37	19	85	207
West Seattle	7	51	10	9	139	216
Ingraham	2	62	32	9	191	296
Rainier Beach	1	53	44	4	91	193
Nathan Hale	3	46	59	5	188	301
Other*	12	8	32	6	41	99
Total (All 9-12)	41	648	425	90	1,532	2,736

TABLE 18

Distribution of 1981-82 Graduates by School by Ethnicity

School	Ethnic Group: Native American	Asian	Black	Latino	White	Total
Ballard	10	41	4	12	264	331
Cleveland	2	108	18	2	66	196
Franklin	7	117	76	15	183	398
Garfield	2	23	106	13	149	293
Roosevelt	3	54	63	11	265	396
Sealth	8	51	30	10	136	235
West Seattle	2	51	7	6	171	237
Ingraham	7	68	31	10	219	335
Rainier Beach	3	36	46	3	79	167
Nathan Hale	6	63	39	8	198	314
Other*	13	9	25	9	69	125
Total (All 9-12)	63	621	445	99	1,799	3,027

*Alternative Schools, Special Programs, Work Training Programs, Inter-Agency Programs, etc.

(dh3:85.S.LV.0-14)

Seattle

DROPOUT DATA

Seattle Public Schools uses the definition provided by the Superintendent of Public Instruction for its annual dropout report, as follows.

A dropout is a student who leaves school for any reason, except death, before graduation or completion of a program of studies and without transferring to another school. An individual is considered a dropout whether his dropping out occurs during or between regular school terms.

The dropout count, therefore, is a year round, or annual, dropout count rather than a nine-month count.

Students who left school for any of the following reasons are classified as dropouts:

- Employment
- Marriage
- Pregnancy
- Enlistment in Armed Forces
- Suspension or expulsion with pupil not returning during the period being reported
- Left school for other reason, but did not enroll and attend the following September.

Students who left school for any of the following reasons are not classified as dropouts:

- Enrollment in another public school district or private school
- Deceased
- Supervision by public or private agency
- Completion of General Education Development Certificate (GED)
- Suspension or expulsion with pupil returning during the period being reported.
- Left school for other reasons, but did enroll and attend the following September
- Physically or mentally unable to attend
- Not a resident at the completion of the reporting period.

These figures are extremely volatile, changing substantially with small changes in the time span covered. This is because "dropouts" are constantly reentering school.

Dropout data is collected on our computer enrollment files. When a student leaves a school, or fails to show up at a new school assignment, the registration secretary drops the students from the active students at that school with a code indicating the reason for leaving. Our dropout reports and data analysis consist of scanning the file for students released for particular reasons who have no subsequent school assignment.

Prepared by George Sanders, 6/3/86
(GS8.DR-OUT)

June 4, 1986

Dr. Susan J. Gruskin, Coordinator
Urban Superintendents Network
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
Programs for the Improvement of Practice
Educational Networks Division
555 New Jersey Avenue, N.W., Room 502
Washington, D.C. 20208

Dear Dr. Gruskin:

Enclosed are materials related to interest of the Urban Superintendents in the dropout issue.

You may contact Olaf Kvamme, 206-587-3406, for additional information or for any needed clarification of the materials provided.

Sincerely,

William M. Kendrick
Superintendent

WMK:ph
Enclosures

SEATTLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS
ADMINISTRATIVE AND SERVICE CENTER • 815 Fourth Avenue North • Seattle, Washington 98109

DROPOUT ACTIVITIES

Re-Entry - The District provides a school program at two geographic sites which allows students who have been removed from their "regular" school for disciplinary reasons to continue to receive an education. Typically students return to their "regular" school at the semester break or at the beginning of the next school year.

Alternative Schools - The District provides alternative high school programs for those students who prefer a less traditional setting. Without these programs, there likely would be a higher number of dropouts."

Inter-Agency Programs - The District provides teachers who work in the physical setting of community agencies and other governmental units serving students who do not attend a "regular" school because of community-related problems.

Summer STEP - The District cooperates in a program involving summer employment of "at risk" 14 and 15 year old students. They are provided an initial special summer program, support services during the regular school year, and an additional summer program.

Summer School - The District offers a tuition free summer school to failing students thus increasing the probability of having them return to school in the fall.

June 6, 1986